

Nutritional Wellness on a Budget

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College life can be busy and stressful and living in an expensive city like Toronto where grocery prices reach new heights every day can cause stress and worry. To deal with it, it is important for us to have a budget that fulfills our nutritional requirements without being too heavy on our pocket. Let's look at some helpful tips that will definitely save you money. However, it is just as important to understand what nutritional wellness means and the positive physical and emotional effects of maintaining good nutrition.

What is Nutritional Wellness?

Nutritional wellness simply means having knowledge about the benefits of proper nutrition and understanding the importance of cooking and eating healthy foods. Good nutritional practices and habits also impact our mental health.

Positive Effects of Good Nutrition

Now that we know what nutritional wellness means, let's look at some of the benefits that good nutrition can provide to college students.

1. **Academic Achievements** – It has been proven that having a well-balanced diet improves brain function and sleep quality. Both of which are important for academic success.
2. **Boosts Immunity** – One thing that the pandemic taught us, is how important it is to have a strong immunity and having a well-balanced diet does the job.
3. **Promotes Sustainability** – One of Seneca Polytechnic's main pillars is sustainability. As students, we are a part of the Seneca community and can easily contribute to its sustainability.

Goals by simply eating healthy food! Since, a healthy diet includes less processed foods and more fresh food, which decreases harmful effects of food production and consumption on the environment and climate.

Through this we help make our environment more sustainable which supports our overall wellbeing, thus, promoting environmental wellness.

Tips to Save Some Money!

Shopping for groceries on a student budget in a city like Toronto, where the cost of living is very high can be difficult. It is important to be smart and remember a few key tips when you shop for food. As a student here are some of the things, I do to help me save on my grocery bill:

1. **Make a list** –

Whether you are planning to go to store or shopping online, having a prepared grocery list can be highly effective in saving you money. It will also cost you less time and less energy. It also takes away your stress of remembering all the grocery items that you need.

I personally keep adding each grocery item to my grocery list as soon as I run out of something. This enables me to do my grocery shopping effortlessly without any stress of missing an item.

2. **Buy frozen vegetables and fruits** –

An increasing variety of fruits and vegetables are now available in the frozen food section of the grocery store. Here are a few reasons why you should be grabbing some:

- They are cheaper than fresh fruits and vegetables.
- They are as nutritious as the fresh ones since fresh vegetables that reach supermarkets lose some of their nutrients in transportation.
- They last longer than fresh produce which results in less food waste and spoiling.

3. **Buy In Bulk** –

If your shopping list contains items like nuts, beans, lentils, and grains, then try to buy them in bulk to save money, since:

- There is no need to keep them in fridge.
- They have longer shelf life.

4. **Shop with a list and budget** –

Being prepared with a shopping list and being mindful of your budget can be very efficient in the following ways:

- You buy only necessary items.
- You won't spend too much on unnecessary purchases.
- You come prepared with for your shopping which saves a lot of your time.

5. **Check for sale items** –

There is always something on sale or clearance in stores and supermarkets. A quick scan of the supermarket's app or site will show you the weekly specials. Here are some links to online websites for your go-to grocery stores:

- **Walmart**- <https://www.walmart.ca/clearance>
- **NoFrills**- <https://www.nofrills.ca/print-flyer?icta=flyer-homepage-hero-banner-guest>
- **Costco**- <https://www.costco.ca/coupons.html?langId=-24>
- **Real Canadian Superstore**- <https://www.realcanadiansuperstore.ca/print-flyer>
- **Loblaws** - <https://www.loblaws.ca/print-flyer>

6. **Remember the store brand** –

Most superstores and grocery stores have their own brands for every section. In-store brands are often much less expensive than other brands. These are the store brands of some of the major superstores, so that you will know what to look out for on your next grocery trip:

- Great Value at Walmart.
- Kirkland Signature at Costco
- No Name products at Loblaws, No Frills and Real Canadian Superstore.

My take as a student

As an international student in Canada, I too was unaware how to shop for food on a budget. I remember spending many hours in grocery stores, just deciding on what to buy and which brand to choose. This consumed a lot of my time and I also ended up buying grocery items which I did not need. However, through my experience and research on this topic, I have gathered these helpful tips which will definitely save you money and time.

The content was adapted from the following resources:

- [HopeWay.org](https://www.hopeway.org/)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/)
- [Stylecraze](https://www.stylecraze.com/)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association](https://www.canadianmentalhealth.ca/)



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